

# Makati, QC launch anti-polio drive

**By Joel E. Zurbano**

MORE than 13,811 children below five years old in Makati City have been given oral polio vaccines during the first two days of a mass vaccination program in the city.

Mayor Abigail Binay said the city's health department was expecting to give OPVs to some 49,000 children by Oct. 27 to protect them against the polio virus.

Meanwhile, Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Wednesday launched an

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intensified door-to-door campaign to eradicate polio.

The city government wants to vaccinate at least 274,785 children below five years old as part of its intensified door-to-door drive against polio, she said.

Doctors and MHD personnel have been conducting house visits in Makati since Oct. 14 to provide OPV to children aged 0 to 59 months who are vulnerable to polio.

Parents who want to have their children vaccinated may also go to the barangay health centers, which are open from Monday to Sunday during office hours (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.) until Oct. 27.

Binay urged parents to have their children vaccinated and keep their surroundings clean to prevent their kids from contracting the disease.

"I encourage Makatizens and the barangays to clean their surroundings. There is no cure for polio but it can be prevented by immunization and by maintaining a clean environment. Community involvement is very important," she said.

According to the World Health Organization, polio or poliomyelitis is a highly infectious disease caused by the wild poliovirus that has three types: type 1, 2, and 3.

The virus enters the body through the intake of food or water that has been contaminated with fecal matter from an infected person and invades the nervous system. It spreads from one person to another and can cause irreversible paralysis of the legs or even death if a person is not vaccinated.

One in every 200 people infected with polio suffers from irreversible paralysis, and among those paralyzed five percent to 10 percent die due to polio.

MHD chief Bernard Sese said the OPV is given to children in three doses.

"The first dose of OPV is given to infants as early as six weeks of age, while the second dose is given one month after the baby received the first dose. The third dose is given four weeks after the second dose," he said.

Sese said those who had received the vaccine would still receive the bivalent OPV to prevent the spread of type 1 and 3 poliovirus strains. **With Rio N. Araja**